

CLAIMS:

We claim:

- 150B A17
1. A method comprising:
    - 2 sending to a manufacturer a customer request for assembly instructions for a
    - 3 grouping of components; and
    - 4 presenting to assemblers a set of assembly instructions which are customized and
    - 5 specific to said grouping of components.
  2. A method according to claim 1 wherein sending includes:
    - 2 scanning bar-code information from said components;
    - 3 grouping said bar-code information; and
    - 4 generating said request for assembly instructions based on said grouped bar-code
    - 5 information and on specifications defined by said manufacturer.
  3. A method according to claim 1 wherein presenting includes:
    - 2 receiving said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer.
  4. A method according to claim 3 wherein presenting further includes:
    - 2 formatting said received set of assembly instructions such that they are in a format
    - 3 utilizable by said assemblers.
  5. A method according to claim 4 wherein presenting further includes:
    - 2 printing out said formatted set of assembly instructions for said assemblers.

1        6.        A method according to claim 1 further comprising:  
2        waiting to receive said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer prior  
3        to assembling of said group of components.

1        7.        A method according to claim 1 further comprising:  
2        assembling said group of components using said set of assembly instructions.

1        8.        A method according to claim 1 further comprising:  
2        replying to said customer request by sending said customized set of assembly  
3        instructions to said customer.

1        9.        A method according to claim 8 wherein replying includes:  
2        receiving said request for assembly instructions from said customer;  
3        formulating a query for a knowledge base, said query based upon the content of  
4        said request; and  
5        retrieving from said knowledge base said customized set of assembly instructions,  
6        said set formed in response to said query.

1        10.       A method according to claim 9 wherein said replying further includes:  
2        formatting said retrieved customized set of instructions into a network-ready  
3        message.

1        11.       A method according to claim 2 further comprising:  
2        initiating a component grouping application software at the location where said  
3        components are received, said software performing said grouping; and

4 sending said grouped bar-code information to a customer server, said customer  
5 server also generating said request.

1 12. A method according to claim 1 wherein said manufacturer and said  
2 customer communicate over a communications network.

1 13. A system comprising:

2 an information device utilized by an assembler of a group of components, said  
3 device configured to group bar-code information scanned from said components;

4 a customer server coupled to said information device over a network, said server  
5 configured to send a request for assembly instructions, said request based on said grouped  
6 bar-code information; and

7 a manufacturer server able to communicate with said customer server, said  
8 manufacturer server replying to said request with a set of customized assembly  
9 instructions, said instructions specific said group of components represented in said  
10 request.

1 14. A system according to claim 13 wherein said customer server receives said  
2 reply from said manufacturer server, said customer server further configured to present to  
3 said assembler said set of customized assembly instructions in a utilizable format.

1 15. A system according to claim 13 further comprising:

2 a knowledge base coupled to said manufacturer server, said knowledge configured  
3 to provide said set of customized assembly in response to receiving a query from said  
4 manufacturer server.

1 16. A system according to claim 15 wherein said query is formulated by said  
2 manufacturer server based upon said request from said customer server.

1 17. A system according to claim 13 wherein said information device is a  
2 personal computer.

1 18. A system according to claim 13 wherein said information device is a  
2 personal digital assistant.

1 19. A system according to claim 13 wherein said manufacturer server and said  
2 customer server are connected via a network.

1 20. An article comprising a computer readable medium having instructions  
2 stored thereon which when executed cause:

3 sending to a manufacturer a customer request for assembly instructions for a  
4 grouping of components; and

5 presenting to assemblers a set of assembly instructions which are customized and  
6 specific to said grouping of components.

1 21. An article according to claim 20 wherein sending includes:

2 scanning bar-code information from said components;

3 grouping said bar-code information; and

4 generating said request for assembly instructions based on said grouped bar-code  
5 information and on specifications defined by said manufacturer.

1 22. An article according to claim 20 wherein presenting includes:  
2 receiving said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer.

1 23. An article according to claim 22 wherein presenting further includes:  
2 formatting said received set of assembly instructions such that they are in a format  
3 utilizable by said assemblers.

1 24. An article according to claim 23 wherein presenting further includes:  
2 printing out said formatted set of assembly instructions for said assemblers.

1 25. An article according to claim 20 further causing:  
2 waiting to receive said set of assembly instructions from said manufacturer prior  
3 to assembling of said group of components.

1 26. An article according to claim 20 further causing:  
2 assembling said group of components using said set of assembly instructions.

1 27. An article according to claim 20 further causing:  
2 replying to said customer request by sending said customized set of assembly  
3 instructions to said customer.

1 28. An article according to claim 27 wherein replying includes:  
2 receiving said request for assembly instructions from said customer;  
3 formulating a query for a knowledge base, said query based upon the content of  
4 said request; and

5 retrieving from said knowledge base said customized set of assembly instructions,  
6 said set formed in response to said query.

1 29. An article according to claim 28 wherein said replying further includes:  
2 formatting said retrieved customized set of instructions into a network-ready  
3 message.

1 30. An article according to claim 21 further causing:  
2 initiating a component grouping application software at the location where said  
3 components are received, said software performing said grouping; and  
4 sending said grouped bar-code information to a customer server, said customer  
5 server also generating said request.